

Amendments to the Specification:

-Please delete the present Specification and insert therefore the following (clean version):

Approved
Brentley
2/20/00 J.

DRILLING FLUID BUCKET AND METHOD

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to an apparatus and method for collecting a drilling fluid. More particularly, but not by way of limitation, this invention relates to an apparatus and method for collecting a drilling fluid contained within a work string on a drilling rig floor.

In the drilling of wells, and in particular, oil and gas wells, it is necessary to drill a bore hole with use of a tubular work string and boring device. The boring device is generally a bit. A fluid is used in the drilling of the bore hole. The drilling fluid has many purposes including but limited to the pressure control of subterranean reservoir pressures, bit lubrication, and lifting bore hole cuttings.

In the course of drilling a well, it becomes necessary to lift the work string from the well bore. Under some circumstances, as the operator is pulling the work string from the well bore, the work string may contain, within the inner diameter portion, the fluid. This may be referred to as pulling a wet string. As readily understood by those of ordinary skill in the art, in the process of tripping the work string from the hole, and once a thread connection is undone, the drilling fluid spills out onto the drill floor. From the drill floor, the fluid may be directed to the mud tanks, but may fall off of the rig, and out into the environment. Many times, the drilling fluid may contain harmful and caustic materials. Sometimes, the drilling fluid contains toxic